

**ENHANCING EARLY LITERACY THROUGH THE
BALANCED INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH**

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ABSTRACT

In recent years literacy has been continually changing with the birth of new modes of communication and information dissemination. New technologies have presented new forms of medium such as audio books, websites, blogs, audio and photo streams. Such advancements in technology and literacy instructions have created a need for children to prepare for much more than just the traditional literacy. Today, children entering Primary One at the age of six to seven in Malaysia, are expected to be able to read and write. Studies have shown that the best time to prepare children for early literacy is before age five. The objective of this research is to study whether the Balanced Instructional Approach is able to enhance early literacy among three to four year old children in a playschool in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. In addition to that, this study also intended to explore the influence of parents on children between ages three and four by using the Balanced Instructional Approach. Six techniques were used to collect data. These multiple sources of evidence helped to triangulate the data so as to provide and reinforce the validity and reliability of the findings in the study. The six chosen techniques were: 1) Observation schedule; 2) Teacher's reflective journal; 3) Questionnaire; 4) Pre- post test 5) Interview and 6) Photographs. The findings indicate that the Balanced Instructional Approach indeed enhances early literacy among children. It further showed that parental involvement played a significant role in the foundation of love for reading among young children.

ABSTRAK

Belakangan ini, literasi telah berubah dengan kehadiran mod komunikasi terbaru serta penyebaran maklumat terkini. Hal ini telah melahirkan pelbagai medium seperti buku audio, laman web, blog serta aliran imej dan audio. Perkembangan sebegini dalam teknologi dan sistem pengajaran dan pembelajaran telah membawa kepada suatu keperluan bagi kanak-kanak untuk mempunyai persediaan yang lebih daripada gaya literasi tradisi. Kini, kanak-kanak yang berusia enam hingga tujuh tahun di harap agar mampu menguasai asas literasi apabila mula melangkah ke alam persekolahan. Kajian telah menunjukkan bahawa jangka masa terbaik bagi menyediakan kanak-kanak untuk literasi peringkat awal adalah sebelum kanak-kanak berumur lima tahun. Obejktif kajian ini adalah untuk menyiasat sama ada kaedah “Balanced Instructional Approach” mampu meningkatkan literasi dalam kalangan kanak-kanak berumur tiga hingga empat tahun di sebuah Taska di Kota Kinabalu. Tambahan itu, kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk menyiasat pengaruh ibubapa terhadap kanak-kanak berumur antara tiga hingga empat tahun dengan menggunakan kaedah “Balanced Instructional Approach”. Enam teknik telah digunakan untuk mengumpul data. Sumber bukti yang pelbagai ini telah membantu dalam proses triangulasi data bagi menyediakan dan mengukuhkan lagi kesahihan dan kebolehpercayaan hasil kajian ini. Enam teknik yang dipilih khas ialah: 1) Jadual pemerhatian; 2) Jurnal Reflektif Guru; 3) Borang Soal Selidik; 4) Pra dan pos ujian 5) Temu bual serta 6) Gambar. Kajian telah menunjukkan bahawa “Balanced Instructional Approach” terbukti memainkan peranan yang penting dalam mengukuhkan literasi awal dalam kalangan kanak-kanak. Kajian ini juga telah menunjukkan bahawa peranan ibubapa penting dalam membina asas gemar membaca dalam kalangan kanak-kanak.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The ability to perceive differences between sounds is essential to language development. This ability is present from or even before birth, and it becomes more refined during the first year of life. In getting ready to understand and use speech, infants first become familiar with the sounds of words and phrases and later attach meanings to them (Juszyk & Hohne, 1997).

I have six children and Sarah is my youngest. Throughout my pregnancy with her, I was teaching a literacy program by using a Synthetic Phonics Approach. I strongly believe that the prenatal environment is the best possible start in a child's life. In my opinion this is the reason Sarah is linguistically more advanced than many other children her age. As soon as Sarah turned a month old, she joined me in my classroom. Although she slept most of the time, research has shown that children do learn subconsciously. They have "absorbent minds" like sponges (Montessori, 1949). Therefore, at only eighteen months, Sarah was able to blend three letter words well. A year later, when Sarah was just two and a half, she began showing interest in whole language reading. *“The premise behind whole language reading is quite simple – learners memorise whole words instead of “sounding out” their parts. Thus, the word “letter” is not broken down into a variety of sounds but is just learned as a single*

unit”(Goodman, 1965). Sarah would make me read the Ladybird Series (her brother’s books) over and over until she had memorized everything. Then in turn, she would read the books back to me. Now, at the age of 3 years and 4 months, Sarah is able to read simple words using the phonics method, and read the Ladybird Series Level 2 through the look-and-say method (Whole Language Method). Through these methods Sarah is now able to write simple words such as ‘cat’, ‘dog’, and ‘snail’. I believe her interest in books developed from the stories she heard me read in my class everyday. According to Fox (2001), illiteracy could be wiped out within one generation if parents and caregivers read aloud to children three stories a day.

Many of the parents say that Sarah is “so able” because she has a mother who is a teacher. This has made me question myself on how true this could be. Comments such as these have led me to do a research on **Enhancing Early Literacy through the Balance Instructional Approach**. My research was conducted in a Playschool situated in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Since my focus was on early literacy, I chose to work with children between the ages of three to four years. This is because “traditionally the period between ages 4 and 8 has been seen as the time when a firm foundation to reading is established, but the process begins before this and continues after it”(Browne, 2001). I have also realized that it is possible for young children between these ages to be able to memorize words through the Whole Word Method and also identify sounds in words through the Phonics Method.

1.1 Background to the Study

As the year 2020 draws closer, Malaysia has made many conscious efforts to improve and develop literacy so that it will achieve a literacy rate of 100% (Zaman, 1998). To date Kuala Lumpur has the highest literacy rate of 97% followed by Selangor 96%. Sarawak on the other hand has the lowest literacy rate of 85% while Sabah has a rate of 87% (UNICEF, 2000).

According to Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, who is also the founder of PERMATA, literacy is one of the most important elements in shaping the life and future of children. She said early literacy was an imperative human capital investment that was fundamental for the nation's progress and prosperity. Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor also said in her keynote address at the official launch of the 4th International Children's Book Conference 2010 in Kuala Lumpur,

"In the context of Malaysia, since independence, the government had embarked on various programmes to improve the literacy rate of the young nation as part of the nation-building strategies. Systematic education programmes have been put in place in order to create an information-rich society and to achieve the national literacy goal of 100 per cent literacy rate by 2020," (Bernama, 2010)

As an educator, I feel the importance to do my part to help our country achieve the ultimate goal of a literacy rate of 100% by the year 2020. A good foundation in early literacy is definitely the answer and I believe that with this, our vision 2020 can be accomplished. This is because a literate country could mean the difference between us succeeding or failing this vision. As the saying goes "The children of today are the leaders of tomorrow," and thus, it is important for an adoption of a well based approach in early literacy.

Teale (2000) says that early literacy is learning to read and write before ages 5 or 6. Fox (2001) says the first day of school is almost too late for a child to learn to read. Therefore it is vital that the right approach is introduced to the child as early as possible.

In recent years, reading instruction has involved methods emphasising phonics and methods emphasising the recognition of words as wholes. As a child, I was taught by the whole word method. We were made to memorise words by sight and at the same time memorize each spelling. This method of learning to read was not the ideal way for me to learn to read. Furthermore, memorization was one of my weakest methods of learning. Hence, learning to read was neither easy nor was it fun. Researchers such as Rudolph Flesch in his book *Why Johnny Can't Read* attacked the whole word approach as it showed that students could not read stories that contained words that they had never read before. (Flesch, 1955).

However, the phonics method emphasises the teaching of letters and sounds. It can be subdivided into analytic or synthetic phonics. Therefore a child does not need to solely depend on memory when reading. Through the phonics method, a child would be able to decode a word by sounding the sounds of the letters. The question is, how do we begin and what do we teach? Analytic phonics is often combined with the teaching of sight words. Children first learn the words as unanalysed wholes and only later learn to break them down (analyse them) in order to understand the relationship between the written symbols and the sounds. For an example, children would be taught that the letters 'a', and 't', when placed together is the word 'at'. They are then taught to read words with the word 'at' in it, by adding different initial sounds such as 'cat', 'mat', 'pat' and so on. I was first introduced to this method when my eldest daughter entered

the Montessori school in 1998. Analytic phonics was very new to me and I did not understand why reading was taught in that way. My daughter would question me on certain sounds in words and I felt handicapped as I did not know them.

Later, in 2004, I was introduced to Synthetic Phonics. Synthetic Phonics starts by the teaching of letters and sounds. After the children have learnt a few sounds, they are able to sound out letters in simple words from left to right and then in turn, blend (synthesise) the sounds. These simple words were such as, 'tap', 'sat', and 'pin'. My son Keeahn found this method fun and exciting as I began using it to teach him. I found that with this method, he was soon able to blend words by the age of two.

When we refer to the Whole Word Method, we refer to the Look-and-Say type and the Whole-Language type. The Look-and-Say type teaches individual words explicitly through flashcards and reading schemes. This approach is based on the repetition of high-frequency words such as 'mummy', 'daddy', and 'me'. It is used by Glenn Doman in the teaching of babies to read. According to Doman (1994), thousands of parents had used Whole-Word Method to teach thousands of children to read successfully. Whole-Language type on the other hand, expects children to identify printed words by using cues from context and pictures. A well known publisher that has been around for decades is the Ladybird Series by Wills & Hepworth (1915). A more recent well known publisher is the Heinemann Series. Books by these publishers are mostly used for children using the Whole-Language Method of reading.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Today, it is pertinent and timely to re-examine the methods used to teach early literacy. Children are no longer viewed as blank slates. They bring a considerable amount of understanding and information to the task of reading and writing. (Savage, 2000). Montessori's philosophy is that children are natural learners, learning from the minute they awake in the morning until they go to sleep at night. They learn by imitation and they will repeat a process over and over again until they master the skill (Montessori, 1949). Having that in mind, it is important to find out which method is best so that it could be used during these vital years. Since children are said to be 'born genius' (Doman 1994), we should try to make the most out of this crucial time.

The question is which method is the most suitable method for our children? *In the so called 'reading wars', in which people argue with deadly ferocity over the best way of teaching reading, some educators do claim to be anti-phonics.*(Fox,2001) Despite the dispute among educationist, experts are now recommending a blend of both the Whole Word Method and the Phonics Method blended together will give us the Balanced Instructional Approach.

Effective teachers do not attempt to mould their students to a particular curriculum or approach. Students respond differently in a variety of areas, including responses to different types of methods and approaches. *"A balanced curriculum of the integrated language arts begins with an affirmation that different learners need different approaches to help them become proficient readers and writers.* (Smith, 1996, p.2)". Indeed, both the Whole Word Method and the Phonics Method are equally capable of teaching children reading. However, if we could agree on the most suitable

and effective way to enhance early literacy, much of the ongoing debate between educationists would soon die down. Therefore, is the Balanced Instructional Approach the most suitable choice since it combines both the Phonics and the Whole Word Method?

Increasingly, researches are finding better results from teachers who take a balanced approach, especially with children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Scholars have begun to call for consensus on the balanced approach. It is time for the debate to cool down and for advocates on both sides to recognize the wisdom of teaching “what works.”

(Matson, 1996)

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to enhance early literacy through the Balanced Instructional Approach (combination of phonics and whole-word approach) among twelve children in a Playschool situated in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Debates over the best approach to teaching early reading have been going on since the 1960s. (Savage,2000) Research has shown that having a strong sense of phonics can aid students in their early reading and develop them into better readers. (Savage,2000) Phonics is the word used to describe the sound the letters make. It is a system of teaching to read that stresses on the relationship between the sounds of English letters and their combination that produce them. The word *bat* for example can be read from its three sounds /b/ /a/ /t/. The word *thick* is also made up of three sounds /th/ /i/ /ck/. Phonics advocates argue that in order to learn to read, most children require a great deal of explicit instruction in the rules of printed text (Wren, 2003).

On the other hand, using the Whole Word Method would lead to memorization and limited vocabulary for a second language learner. The Whole Word Method is also

associated with the Look-and-Say Method. It is also known as ‘sight method’ or ‘configurational reading’. It is a method used to teach reading by introducing words to children as whole units without analysis of their subparts (Beck and Juel, 2002). It involves teaching children to sight read words and to be able to pronounce a whole word as a single unit.

In this study, it is not whether the students can spell the words accurately; the major goal is whether the children understand what is on the printed page and to learn to identify the words in them. However before doing so, children must master certain pre-reading skills. (Lonigan, Burgess, & Anthony, 2000). What I am interested in; is to see whether the Balanced Instructional Approach can enhance early literacy. This study focuses specifically on combining two reading instructional approaches namely, Synthetic Phonics (Phonics Method) and the Look-and- Say method (Whole Word Method) hence developing the Balanced Instructional Approach.

1.4 Research Objectives

This study aims to answer the following objectives:

1. To study the effects of the Balanced Instructional Approach in enhancing early literacy among three to four year old children in a playschool in Kota Kinabalu.
2. To determine the role of parents in influencing children’s early literacy between ages three to four by using the Balanced Instructional Approach.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. In what ways does the Balanced Instructional Approach enhance early literacy among three to four year old children in a playschool in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah?
2. In what ways do parents influence children's early literacy between ages three and four by using the Balanced Instructional Approach?

1.6 Limitation of the Study

In this study, the Balanced Instructional Approach was used as the main approach. It was found that the children were not all of the same level. Hence, the rate of understanding for each student might differ. This could also be due to their aptitude and different learning styles. Thus, the impact of the use of Balanced Instructional Approach might also differ for different students. We have to bear in mind that every child is different and they develop at their own pace.

This study was also carried out in a limited time frame. Time was a major limitation as there were public holidays and a two week school holiday break shortly after the research began. It would be a challenge for the teachers' as the term break would have interrupted their continuity. This is because the children's memory retention may vary due to their differences in cognitive development, personality and environment change during the school break. In addition, as this was a small scale study involving only 12 students in a playschool in Kota Kinabalu, it might not represent the samples of the whole population. Therefore the results of the study would not be

representative of the school's population and the country in general. Thus, the findings of the study should be interpreted with these limitations in mind.

1.7 Definition of Terms

The operational definitions used in this research are:

1.7.1 Balanced Instructional Approach

The Balanced Instructional Approach that is used in my study is a combination of Synthetic Phonics Method and Whole Word Method approach.

1.7.2 Synthetic Phonics Method

The term Synthetic Phonics in my study comes from the Jolly Phonics Programme. It teaches children 42 sounds which are broken into seven groups. The first group consists of six letters which are 's, a, t, i, p, n'. These six letters are taught first since children are able to read more words with these letters. After introducing the first three sounds through stories, actions and songs, children would be able to read the word 'sat' from left to right and then blend (synthesise) the sounds.

1.7.3 Look- and -say Approach (Whole Word Method)

The Look-and-Say approach in this study is defined as teaching individual words explicitly, for example by using flashcards or reading schemes based on the repetition of high-frequency words.

1.7.4 Literacy

Literacy is defined as the ability to read. Writing is not taken into account as the samples in this study are children aged four years and below. Many of them were not yet ready to write.

1.7.5 Reading

My definition to reading is to understand the meaning of words being read through either word identification, word recognition, or decoding. The new *Literacy Dictionary* defines both word recognition and word identification as “the process of determining the pronunciation and some degree of meaning of an unknown word” (Harris & Hodges, 1995 pp. 282-283).

1.7.6 Emergent Literacy

Emergent Literacy involves the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are developmental indications to conventional forms of reading and writing. The three primary domains of Emergent Literacy related to reading and writing were the child’s *Oral Language, Print Knowledge and Phonological Processing*.

1.7.7 Oral Language

Oral Language means having Vocabulary Knowledge, Syntactic Knowledge and Narrative Knowledge.

1.7.8 Print Knowledge

Print Knowledge is when a child has the understanding that it is the print that reflects the words and not other parts of books like the pictures or spaces between words. The child must also have the understanding that there are 26 different letters in English and each letter is associated with a different name and sound.

1.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the background of the study briefly discussed literacy in Malaysia and the importance of early literacy. It also then discusses the various approaches and methods of reading in early literacy. The statement of the problem revealed the conflict between the methods and approaches, and how it could cause segregation to what is taught. In addition, it highlighted that all the methods are capable of teaching children to read, however the Balanced Instructional Approach could be the standard in which educators agree upon to use. Two research objectives and two research questions were considered for this study. My study could elicit significant findings to share regarding the affects of the Balanced Instructional Approach in enhancing children's early literacy. The definition of terms provided the scope and context of this research.

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Appendix A

Teacher's reflective journal

Date, Time & Place: 17 May 2010**Activity/Incident: Reflection on pre test**

| | |
|--|---|
| Experience or value – Who? What? Why? How? | I did my first pre-test with the Jolly Champs class today. They were worse then expected. I am actually worried about this research. I am unsure about how much can be done in two weeks. So many children are unable to even identify their names. They showed low self esteem. They answered very softly or shook their heads as a sign that they did not know the name nor the sound of the letters. Most of them are unable to concentrate! There were only 4 of them who are up to the center's standard. It was obvious that these 4 children were very confident. They answered loudly as if to show off how much they knew. There was no hesitation when they named the letters and sounded out the sounds. |
| How did you feel? | Worried, frustrated, guilty, stressed |
| Could it have happened any other way? | If I had personally taken the class over when Ms Fee was on maternity leave, the children would be reading by now! |
| What did you learn? | Plan better and keep a close eye on relief teachers. |
| What do you think should be done? | I need to work closely with Ms Fee to catch up on lost time. |
| What do you need to get it done? | Parental support and possibly extend class time by an extra 30 minutes in semester 2. |
| Other thoughts | I must interview the parents and build better rapport with them so that we may be able to work together to enhance the children's early literacy |

Appendix B

Pre- post test

| | | | | | |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Name: | | | | | |
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Appendix C

Observation schedule

Observation Form

| READING | |
|---|--|
| Handles Books Appropriately | |
| Face front | |
| Right side up | |
| Turns pages one at a time- left to right | |
| Shows respect for books | |
| Recognizes the title | |
| Reads Pictures/ Demonstrates Interests | |
| Picks up book (s) on their own | |
| Describes pictures orally | |
| Creates own story to connect with the picture | |
| Retells the story using picture clues | |
| Speaks freely about the story with prompting | |
| Speaks freely of the story without prompting | |
| Reads By Memory | |
| Repeats words accurately using picture clues. | |
| Repeats word accurately looking at the print | |
| Repeats word patterns/ sentences accurately looking at print | |
| Uses expression | |
| Turns page (s) at the appropriate time | |
| Recognize Some Words | |
| Reads high frequency words in familiar context | |
| Reads high frequency words in unfamiliar context | |
| Has some sight word knowledge | |
| Uses Reading Strategies to Read Independently | |
| Uses picture clues | |
| Demonstrates letter/sounds match from beginning and ending sounds | |
| Uses context clues | |

| PHONICS | |
|--|--|
| Recognizes Letters of the First Name | |
| Identifies letters in context of the child's own name | |
| Identifies letters in random order using flash cards | |
| Identifies letters in context of other words | |
| Recognizes and Names Letters Introduced | |
| Identifies letters of the alphabet using flash cards or songs | |
| Identifies letters introduced in a random order | |
| Demonstrates an Awareness of Letter Sounds | |
| Identifies and reproduces the initial consonant sound of a given word. | |
| Uses Knowledge of Letter Sounds to Sound Out Words | |
| Makes association between sounds, symbols and words by recognizing letters and attempts at phonetic spelling at word recognition | |

Appendix D

Questionnaire

1. Which part of the day did you choose to do the literacy programme with your child? Please circle one or more.

A) Morning B) Afternoon C) Night
2. How long did each session take?

3. How many sessions did you have in a day?

4. Was the programme consistent?
A) Yes B) No
5. Which part of the house did you choose to carry out the programme?

6. Did you stick the words on the wall? If yes, which part of the house?

7. Were all sessions interesting for your child? Elaborate.

8. Did your child show a difference towards his or her interest in letters, words and books once you started the literacy programme? Please elaborate.

9. In your opinion who plays a more important role in early literacy, parents or school? Explain.

10. Do you feel the knowledge that you have in early literacy is sufficient for you to help your child in literacy development? Elaborate.

Appendix E

INTERVIEW 1 (I 1)

Interview with Parent- (Shavahn's Mummy)

Q1 In your opinion how early should a parent begin to read to their child?

Parent *While they are within the womb*

Q2 When did you begin with your child?

Parent *I used to read to her brother since she was in my womb and just after she was born, about 3 days old. She has always been around us listening to everything.*

Q3 How often do you read to your child?

Parent *Everyday*

Q4 How long does each session take?

Parent *5 -10 minutes depends on how tired am I....*

Q5 How do you decide on what books to buy?

Parent *Big letters, beautifully illustrated with good moral values.*

Q6 What are your personal expectation of Shavahn when you sent her to school at 18 months of age?

Parent *I just want her to have friends, to socialise, learn to listen to authority, not just mum and dad.*

Q7 What do you think the role of the school is for your child?

Parent *To prepare a safe, clean and loving environment that would allow my child to reach her best and to always encourage her in all she does. I hope none of the teachers would ever kill her spirit which her parents spend a lot of time in building.*

Q8 What was your experience with the whole word reading that you had to do with your child in May?

Parent *Shavahn loved it, she was the one asking me to do the flashcards every night...even when I was tired and was not in the mood. She soon found it too easy that she wanted me to read to her books that I was reading with her brother. She got me to read it over and over until she was able to read it to me. Personally, I felt it was a bounding time between us during those few minutes.*

I Thank you so much for your time

INTERVIEW 2 (I 2)

Interview with Parent- (Ben's Mummy)

Q1 In your opinion how early should a parent begin to read to their child?

Parent *When the baby can sit*

Q2 When did you begin with your child?

Parent *I started late.....since I am working and am very busy. My work does not allow me to do this as much as I would like to.*

Q3 So how old was he?

Parent 2 years

Q4 How often do you read to your child?

Parent *Everyday. But we do flashcards, Encyclopaedia Knowledge, and Chinese*

Q5 How long does each session take?

Parent 5 -10 minutes twice a day. My maid helps me when I am at work.

Q6 How do you decide on what books to buy?

Parent *I choose books that will give him general knowledge because that is very important. The more he knows the better future he has..*

Q7 What are your personal expectation of Ben when you sent him to school at 18 months of of age?

Parent *I wanted him to be together with his best friend they did everything together since they were babies....*

Q8 What do you think the role of the school is for your child?

Parent *Since I know the importance of starting young, I hope the school can teach my son all that I am unable to teach since I believe you are the professionals after all.*

Q9 What was your experience with the whole word reading that you had to do with your child in May?

Parent *Ben was not interested in your flashcards. I think you must make it bigger so I used Glenn Doman's flashcards. We do it twice a day 5 minutes Chinese, 5 minutes English, 5 minutes Encyclopaedia Knowledge.*

Q10 Do you do this everyday?

Parent Yes.

Q11 Does Ben enjoy these sessions?

Parent He is very good in it.

Q12 But does he ENJOY it?

Parent *Should be.*

Q13 Do you enjoy these sessions?

Parent *I have to.....It is for his future*

INTERVIEW 3 (I 3)
Interview with Parent- (Ken's Mummy)

Q1 In your opinion how early should a parent begin to read to their child?

Parent *As soon as they can speak or recognise things.*

Q2 When did you begin with your child?

Parent *My daughter 18months and Ken 2 years.*

Q3 How often do you read to your child?

Parent *Once every 3 days initially but ever since Ken started school at the age of 3, I read almost everyday. I find he seems to be more interested in books and understands more.*

Q4 How long does each session take?

Parent *20 minutes*

Q5 How do you decide on what books to buy?

Parent *Colourful, big letters, big words. Disney characters interests my kids. They usually influence the choice of books we read.*

Q6 What are your personal expectations of Ken when you sent him to school at 3 years of age?

Parent *Able to count and recognise number 1 to 20. Recognise A to Z. Spell his name. Know his parents name. Able to name the months in the year in the correct positioning.*

Q7 What do you think the role of the school is for your child?

Parent *Teach independence, self esteem, socialising and just to be in a different environment from home and with children his age.*

Q8 What was your experience with the whole word reading that you had to do with your child in May?

Parent *We did it every night but it slowly decreased, I became very busy so.....but I put the words on the wall. He can read the initial words that were taught to him but not the later ones.*

Q9 Why do you think he is unable to read the later words?

Parent *Hahaha.....I was busy and did not teach him. He is a very bright boy.....*

I Thank you so much for your time

Appendix F

Letter to the parents

Date: 11 May 2010

Dear Parent,

We are currently doing a Masters Research on the Balanced Instructional Approach in teaching children to read. We would like to include your child along with about 15 of his or her classmates, in this research project. This project will be conducted five times a week for two weeks during your child's regular phonics class. Children will learn the letter sounds and read two words a day. Part of the research includes parental involvement whereby, you would need to spend 10 minutes a day reinforcing what your child had learned in school. Children who do not participate will do other school work during this time.

Your child's participation in this project is completely voluntary and only those children who have parental permission and who want to participate will do so. You are free to withdraw your permission for your child's participation at any time and for any reason without penalty. These decisions will have no effects on your future relationship with the school or your child's status.

The information that is obtained during this research project will be kept strictly confidential and would not become a part of your child's school record. Any sharing or publication of the research results will not identify any of the participants by name.

In the space at the bottom of this letter please indicate whether you do or do not want your child's to participate in this project and return this note to the teacher in charge by the 14th May 2010.

We look forward to working with your child. We think that our research will be enjoyable for both children and parents who participate and will help those involved to learn about reading in a fun way and improve parental bonding with their child.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact us at our centre during office hours.

Sincerely,

Creena Alison Wong
Researcher
0168409055

Angelicia Thane
Teacher in charge
088261228

I do / do not (circle one) give permission for my child _____ (name of child) to participate in the research described above.

(Print) Parent's name

(Parent signature)

Date:

Appendix G

‘The Basis of Successful Teaching’
Adapted from ‘The Basics of Good Teaching’
(Glenn Doman & Janet Doman 1994)

1. Be joyful at all times.
2. Respect your child.
3. Teach only when both you and your child are happy.
4. Stop before your child asks you to stop.
5. Show materials quickly.
6. Be consistent with the programme.
7. Remember all children are different.
8. Do not compare your child to another.
9. Begin at the time of the day when your child is receptive.
10. Use the part of the house that has few distracting factors.
11. Use a corner of the room that has as little furniture, pictures or objects that may distract the child’s vision.
12. As you say the word, have your full attention on his face.
13. Direct your attention and enthusiasm on him.
14. Do not ask your child to repeat the words.
15. After the fifth word, give your child a hug and kiss. Display your affection.
16. Stick the words on the wall.
17. Words must always be placed at the child’s eye level.
18. Teach only if the child shows interest to learn.
19. Make all activities as interesting as possible.
20. Having fun is the secret to your success.

Read to your child everyday. Flash cards to your child three times a day.

HOW TO FLASH THE CARDS**Standard Daily Programme**

Per set: 1 set

Per session: 1 set = 5 words

Frequency: 3 times a day.

Interval: Minimum 15 minutes

Intensity: 5 seconds per set.

New: One word a day

Duration: 3 times x 5 days = 15 times

| Day | Routine | Total Sessions |
|-----|--|----------------|
| 1 | One set x 3 times | 3 |
| 2 | Repeat the same set | 3 |
| 3 | Repeat the same set | 3 |
| 4 | Repeat the same set | 3 |
| 5 | Repeat the same set | 3 |
| 6 | From day 6, daily remove 1 old word and add in one new word. | 3 |

Appendix H

Daily Lesson Plans

| Letter- Sound Learning | Week 1 lesson 1 's' |
|--|-------------------------|
| Write the lower case letter 's' in the middle of the board. Show children the letter 's' in the Jolly Phonics Big Book. Introduce the name of the letter and the sound. | s |
| Tell the children a short story about a snake. (Refer to Jolly Phonics Handbook for ideas). Sing the 's' song from the Jolly Song book. Children say /ssss/, weaving their arms, imitating the movement of a snake. | Say /s/ |
| Point to 's' on the board. Say, "This is /s/." (Say the sound, not the letter name) Point to it again. Ask "What is this?" Children say /s/. | 's' sounds /s/ |
| Write words containing the letter 's' on the board. OR show the children words in print with the letter 's' (e.g. in the Jolly Phonics Big Book). Ask a child to point to the letter 's'. If the child points correctly, all the children say /ssss/. At this stage the children are NOT asked to read these words. | Find the letter for /s/ |

| Identifying 's' Sound and Letter Formation | Week 1 lesson 1 's' |
|--|---|
| Say a word. The children say the word. Ask them if they can hear /s/ in it. Repeat with a few more words. | Listen for the sound /s/ Stick snail nest bee |
| Talk to the children through the formation of 's' while demonstrating 's' on a line on the board. | e.g. Start at the top, back and round and back and round again to the bottom. |
| Show the formation of 's' in the air while describing the movement, taking care when facing the children that the letter is formed the correct way round for the children. The children watch and then imitate, saying /ssss/. They do this several times. | Form 's' in the air |
| The children practise writing 's' on sand, a whiteboard or a line on paper, depending on the age of the child. | Write 's' |

Suggestions for Follow-up Activities

- Begin a Sound Book with each child. Write 's' on the first page. Ask the child to say the sound.
- Play 'Hunt the Letter'. Ask the children to look for 's' in story books, notices, etc.
- Ask children to complete the Jolly Phonics Sound Sheet for 's', holding their pencils correctly. *Do not ask them to read the words.*
- Point to 's' on the wall frieze and ask the children, 'What is this?' They say /s/ and weave their arms like a snake.
- Say words like a robot. E.g., say /s/ /i/ /t/. The children say 'sit' and sit down. Say /j/ /u/ /m/ /p/. They say 'jump' and jump.
- Form letter shape in sand